

Ahwatukee Businesswoman of Year is dance studio founder

by *Coty Dolores Miranda* - Nov. 9, 2010 12:57 PM
Special for the Republic

The Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce first gala awards evening honoring 10 Women in Business Palo Verde nominees and naming the 2010 Businesswoman of the Year was a sellout success.

The "Night to Remember Women in Business Ceremony," held at The Raven Golf Club at South Mountain - a chamber member - was a glitzy affair from the moment members and guests walked a red carpet to the entryway.

Amid dinner, dancing and cocktails, the awards presentation was as much a nail-biter as some Oscar contests. When 2009 Palo Verde winner Patty Durant announced Ahwatukee resident and Dance Studio 111 owner Kimberly Lewis as this year's Businesswoman of the Year, four tables of her guests and fans erupted with cheers and dancing.

Lewis, clad in a floor-length gray crepe off-the-shoulder gown, didn't immediately react and when she did, appeared stunned.

"Those of you who know me know I'm never at a loss for words, but to be awarded this honor as I stand with all these fantastic women, it's just such a surreal moment," she said.

Lewis later said it took her breath away, especially realizing it was 20 years to the day

that her Suns Dance Team, which she founded, first performed.

The 10 finalists were gleaned from 32 nominations - the most nominations ever received.

It was the first year in the Chamber's 16-year history that the Palo Verde Awards were presented in a gala format. Previously awarded at Women in Business luncheons, last year they evolved into an evening cocktail and hors d'oeuvres event at Grace Inn.

Women in Business committee chair Stephanie Fierro, an Ahwatukee attorney, said she was delighted when attendees showed up in evening gowns and tuxes.

"We said 'black tie optional' so I figured most people would opt out," she laughed. "That's the thing that had met with the most resistance so when I saw everyone got into that aspect - the whole town spiffed up - I felt vindicated."

As a result of the sell-out crowd, Kimbel said they plan to repeat the gala annually.

Advertisement

The advertisement features the USA TODAY logo at the top left. The main title "AutoPilot" is in large, bold, black font, with a blue airplane icon to its right. Below the title is a smartphone displaying the app's interface, which includes a "USA TODAY Meeting" section with a list of items: "A6 BNA to IAD Landed 09/21/2009 11:48 AM", "73° Washington (IAD) Partly Cloudy", and "View a Flickr gallery of Washington". To the right of the phone, the text reads "The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®". Below this, it says "Presented by: Hampton" with the Hampton logo. At the bottom right, a blue box contains the text "SEE HOW IT WORKS >>".

"It's really a night to honor and celebrate the business women who are leaders in our community," she said. "And when we look at the bios of these 10 women, their accomplishments would make any jaw drop."

The other nine nominees honored Saturday night:

•
Katherine Christensen, owner and founder of Phoenix based Katherine Christensen & Associates, Inc.

•
Lindy Lutz Cash, co-owner with her husband Kevin of Foothills Ace Hardware and Globe Ace Hardware.

•
Norma McCormick, owner of Clean N Fresh Cleaning Service, LLC and a chamber board member.

•
Martha Neese, owner of Von Hanson's Meats and Spirits, and Ahwatukee resident.

•
Connie Nelson-Askew, director of the Ahwatukee Foothills Y.

•
Agnes Oblas, owner of New Paths to Healthcare, LLC.- Michelle Rubino, founder and director of the Ahwatukee Children's Theatre.

•
Karen Starbowski, financial planner, MassMutual [Financial Services](#).

Betty Teille, [financial advisor](#) who opened Ahwatukee's Edward Jones branch.

•
Mountain Pointe High School alum Kristin Kerns and Desert Vista High School alum Brooklyn Hamel were named recipients of two \$500 scholarships awarded to local women continuing their education.

Copyright © 2011, azcentral.com. All rights reserved. Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Rights](#)

Advertisement

The advertisement features the USA TODAY logo at the top left. The main title "AutoPilot" is in large, bold, black font, with a blue airplane icon to its right. Below the title is a smartphone displaying the app's interface, which includes a "USA TODAY Meeting" section for Sep 21, 2009, with flight details for A6 (BNA to IAD Landed 09/21/2009 11:48 AM), weather for Washington (73° Partly Cloudy), and a link to view a Flickr gallery of Washington. To the right of the phone, the text reads "The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®". Below this, it says "Presented by: Hampton" with the Hampton logo. At the bottom right, a blue button contains the text "SEE HOW IT WORKS »".